

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 24 and 25 as set forth below.

Please add new claim 33 as set forth below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Upon entry of the present amendment, the claims will stand as follows:

Claims 1-20 (Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) A method for producing L-aspartic acid comprising:

treating an ammonium fumarate solution, which consists essentially of ammonium fumarate and water, with aspartase to generate an ammonium L-aspartate solution;

heating the ammonium L-aspartate solution to a temperature within the range of 50 to 130°C;

adding fumaric acid in the form of dry crystals, moisture-containing crystals, or an aqueous suspension to the heated ammonium L-aspartate solution in a molar ratio of 0.4 to 0.8 to the total molar amount of ammonium L-aspartate and ammonium fumarate contained in the ammonium L-aspartate solution to form a resultant mixture and applying a shearing force to the resultant mixture, while maintaining the temperature between 50°C and 130°C to obtain a homogenous solution;

cooling the homogenous solution at a rate of 0.1 to 5°C per minute to between 25 and 100°C, thereby obtaining a suspension containing L-aspartic acid; and

separating L-aspartic acid crystals from the suspension.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the cooling is performed by evaporating water under reduced pressure; condensing evaporated water by cooling through a

condenser; and either returning the condensed water to a reactor for L-aspartic acid crystallization or removing the condensed water.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 22, wherein pressure reduction at the time of cooling under reduced pressure is performed at a rate of 1-20 torr per minute from a range of pressure 10-200 torr higher than the vapor pressure at which the solution to be cooled begins to boil.

24. (Currently amended) A method for producing L-aspartic acid comprising:

treating an ammonium fumarate solution, which consists essentially of ammonium fumarate and water, with aspartase to generate an ammonium L-aspartate solution;

heating the ammonium L-aspartate solution to a temperature within the range of 50 to 130°C;

adding fumaric acid in the form of dry crystals, moisture-containing crystals, or an aqueous suspension to the heated ammonium L-aspartate solution in a molar ratio of 0.4 to 0.8 to the total molar amount of ammonium L-aspartate and ammonium fumarate contained in the ammonium L-aspartate solution to form a resultant mixture and applying a shearing force to the resultant mixture, while maintaining the temperature between 50°C and 130°C to obtain a homogenous solution;

cooling the homogenous solution by feeding the homogenous solution into a vessel, ~~wherein the vessel the temperature of which is preadjusted to a temperature for completion~~ completion of crystallization ~~of to crystallize~~ L-aspartic acid, thereby obtaining a suspension containing L-aspartic acid; and

separating L-aspartic acid crystals from the suspension.

25. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 24, wherein the suspension containing L-aspartic acid is ~~in the range of~~ at a temperature from 25°C to 100°C when the ~~L-aspartic-L-~~L-aspartic acid crystals are separated therefrom.

26. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21 or 24, wherein the homogenous solution is further maintained at 50 to 130°C for 0.1 second to 1 hour.

27. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21 or 24, wherein the shearing force is applied by mixing the resultant mixture continuously.

28. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21 or 24, wherein the separating step is performed by filtration.

29. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 28, wherein the mother liquor obtained by the filtration is used as a source of ammonium fumarate.

30. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 29, wherein the mother liquor is used repeatedly.

31. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21 or 24, further comprising washing the L-aspartic acid crystals obtained in the separating step with water.

32. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 31, wherein washing liquid obtained after washing is used as a source of ammonium fumarate.

Please add new claim 33 as follows:

33. (New) The method according to claim 24, wherein the cooling comprises feeding the homogeneous solution into a vessel, wherein the homogeneous solution or the moisture content of the homogeneous solution is evaporated under reduced pressure, thereby obtaining a suspension containing L-aspartic acid.

34. (New) The method according to claim 24, wherein the cooling comprises feeding the homogenous solution into a vessel, wherein the vessel is preadjusted to a temperature of from 25° C to 100° C under reduced pressure, thereby obtaining a suspension containing L-aspartic acid.